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Letter dated 7 March 2000 from the Permanent Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from our Governments, we have the honour to submit the text of a joint Russian-Iranian statement on the proposed pipeline through the Caspian Sea, issued during the visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation to the Islamic Republic of Iran on 28 November 1999 (see annex).

We should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 99.

(*Signed*) Hadi **Nejad Hosseinian**
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Annex

[Original: Russian]

Joint statement by the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the proposed construction of a pipeline through the Caspian Sea

The Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran, convinced that the preservation for future generations of the unique Caspian ecosystem and of its biodiversity requires close cooperation and coordination of the efforts of all the Caspian States, reacted with heightened interest and special concern to the recent signature without their participation of a document concerning economic development of the Caspian Sea in the form of the construction and operation of a Transcaspian underwater pipeline.

The Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran have already stated repeatedly, including in an official context, their categorical objection to the implementation of such projects before all the Caspian States have finally reached general agreement on the adoption of a new legal status for the Caspian Sea and the protection of its ecological security. Such protection involves minimizing possible harm to the marine environment, including the unique sturgeon population. Unfortunately, the rush to implement such projects, and primarily the project for the Transcaspian underwater pipeline, is only complicating and postponing the outcome of the efforts being made by all the Caspian States to find just and generally acceptable solutions concerning the various aspects of the legal status of the Caspian Sea and arrangements for its economic development.

The parties consider that, until some new legal status is devised for the Caspian Sea, the Treaty between the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and Persia of 26 February 1921 and the Treaty on Trade and Navigation between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Iran of 25 March 1940 retain their full legal validity.

The Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran believe that the questions concerning the protection of the environment of the Caspian Sea involve the interests of each Caspian State, so that no one of them has the right to take unilateral action that would jeopardize the interests of the others.

The Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran openly announce that they do not agree to the implementation of any projects for Transcaspian underwater pipelines, which pose an environmental threat in conditions of extremely active geodynamics.

The parties express the hope that, in the course of the coming meeting of Deputy Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Caspian States within the framework of the special working group on the permanent definition of the legal status of the Caspian Sea, effective measures will be taken to elaborate an appropriate Convention and achieve speedy signature of five-party agreements on the protection of the environment of the Caspian Sea, the preservation and use of its biological resources and the establishment of an Economic Cooperation Council of Caspian States.